

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A dough intermediate comprising:

a dough intermediate having a shape intended to produce aesthetic features upon subjecting said dough intermediate to a finishing step, said aesthetic features created through stamping, cutting, slicing or combinations thereof to produce lobes, sections, portions or combinations thereof that are visible after said finishing step;

a plasticizing agent applied onto an entire exposed surface of to said intermediate at least prior to said finishing step so as to substantially coat an external the entire exposed surface of said intermediate to form a plasticized sealing layer on said external entire exposed surface of said dough intermediate including said aesthetic features formed during the finishing step, said plasticized sealing layer providing at least a partial seal on the entire exposed surface thereby increasing fluidity of the dough intermediate and restricting dehydration to aid in expansion; and

wherein upon subjecting said dough intermediate to an intermediate heat or energy treatment step, said dough intermediate with said plasticized sealing layer yielding an enhanced crown or cap and BSV of greater than 3 ml/g after a final finishing step.

2. (Original) A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said plasticizing agent is butter.

3. (Original) A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said plasticizing agent is an oil.

4. (Original) A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said plasticizing agent is a liquefied fat.

5. (Original) A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said lobes, sections, portions or combinations thereof are formed by cuts extending up to 98% of said dough intermediate.

6. (Original) A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said dough intermediate is partially baked prior to releasing said dough intermediate to a retail, wholesale or food service outlet.

7. (Original) A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said finishing step is selected from the group that includes baking, frying, heating or combinations thereof.
8. (Original) A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said finishing step is baking at a temperature between 325 and 400.degree. F.
9. (Original) A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said aesthetic features are lobes on the dough intermediate.
10. (Original) A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said intermediate heat or energy treatment step is par-baking.
11. (Original) A dough intermediate as recited in claim 10, wherein said energy treatment is selected from a group including microwave, convection and radiant.
12. (Currently Amended) A method of preparing a dough intermediate having improved aesthetic and organoleptic properties upon subjecting the dough intermediate to a finishing step, comprising the steps of:
 - preparing a dough;
 - creating individual dough intermediates from said dough;
 - applying a plasticizing agent to a an entire exposed surface of said dough intermediate to form a partially sealed sealing layer on a the entire exposed surface of said dough intermediate,;
 - providing a cutting force to said dough intermediate to form a plurality of lobes, sections, portions and the like;
 - treating said dough intermediate to a partial finishing step to create a partially baked dough intermediate;
 - delivering said partially baked dough intermediate to a retail, wholesale or food service outlet; and
 - subjecting said partially baked dough intermediate to a final finishing step so as to yield a baked product having improved organoleptic and aesthetic properties.
13. (Original) A method of preparing a dough intermediate as recited in claim 10, wherein said plasticizing agent is selected from the group including butter, oil, liquefied fat and combinations thereof.

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14. (Original) A method of preparing a dough intermediate as recited in claim 10, wherein said cutting force is a mechanical cutting force selected from a group including cutting, stamping, slicing or combinations thereof.
15. (Original) A method of preparing a dough intermediate as recited in claim 10, wherein said cutting force is selected from a group including ultrasonic, laser, water or air jetting and combinations thereof.
16. (Original) A method of preparing a dough intermediate as recited in claim 10, including a further step of applying an additional coating of plasticizing agent to said partially baked dough intermediate after subjecting said partially baked dough intermediate to a final finishing step.
17. Cancelled.
18. (Currently Amended) A par-baked dough intermediate having a baked specific volume of at least 3 ml/g, said intermediate having a plasticized sealing layer formed from a butter, oil, liquefied fat or combinations thereof; said plasticized sealing layer coated substantially over an entire exposed surface of said dough intermediate and said plasticized sealing layer is introduced into centrally disposed cuts and crevices through cutting so as to coat lobes, sections or portions to be formed on said dough intermediate upon being subjected to a finishing step such that the sealing layer at least partially seals the entire exposed surface and said plasticizing sealing layer improves dough fluidity and reduces dehydration of said dough intermediate.
19. (Withdrawn) A dough product having an enhanced Baked Specific Volume comprising:
 - a dough intermediate having a plasticizing agent applied to an external surface of said dough intermediate to form a plasticized layer on the external surface, wherein a baked product resulting from subjecting said dough intermediate to a heat or energy treatment step yields at least a 9% increase in Baked Specific Volume when compared to a dough product baked from another dough intermediate lacking a plasticized layer.
20. (Withdrawn) The dough product of claim 19, wherein the dough intermediate assumes a specific aesthetic shape following the heat or energy treatment step.

21. (Withdrawn) The dough product of claim 19, wherein the plasticizing agent is selected from the group consisting of a dairy fat, an animal fat, a vegetable oil and combinations thereof.
22. (Withdrawn) The dough product of claim 19, wherein the dough intermediate is par-baked.
23. (Withdrawn) The dough product of claim 19, wherein the dough intermediate is selected from the group consisting of a roll intermediate, a biscuit intermediate, a bun intermediate, a cinnamon roll intermediate, a croissant intermediate, a muffin intermediate, a bread intermediate, a breadstick intermediate, a pizza crust intermediate and a pastry intermediate.
24. (Withdrawn) A method for preparing a dough product having an enhanced Baked Specific Volume comprising:
 - forming a dough intermediate,
 - applying a plasticizing agent to an exterior portion of said dough intermediate to form a plasticized layer on the exterior portion; and
 - baking said dough intermediate wherein the application of the plasticizing agent effects at least a 9% increase in Baked Specific Volume when compared to a dough intermediate which lacks a plasticized layer.
25. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, further comprising:
 - shaping the dough intermediate to a desired aesthetic shape wherein the plasticizing agent is embedded within fissures formed on the exterior portion of the dough intermediate.
26. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 25, wherein shaping the dough intermediate comprises a shaping step selected from the group consisting of stamping, cutting and slicing the dough intermediate.
27. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, wherein applying the plasticizing agent comprises spraying a liquid fat or oil onto the exterior portion of said dough intermediate.
28. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, further comprising:
 - par-baking the dough intermediate following application of the plasticizing agent; and

freezing the par-baked dough intermediate.

29. (Withdrawn) A dough intermediate comprising:
a plasticizing agent applied to said intermediate to increase fluidity of the dough intermediate and aid in expansion; and
wherein said dough intermediate upon subjecting to a heat or energy treatment step yields a dough product having a Baked Specific Volume of greater than 3 ml/g.

30. (Withdrawn) The dough intermediate of claim 29, wherein the plasticizing agent is selected from the group consisting of a dairy fat, an animal fat, a vegetable oil and combinations thereof.

31. (Withdrawn) The dough intermediate of claim 29, wherein the dough intermediate is a shaped dough intermediate having at least one fissure formed on an exterior portion of the shaped dough intermediate and wherein the plasticizing agent is embedded within the fissure.

32. (Withdrawn) The dough intermediate of claim 29, wherein the dough product has a Baked Specific Volume of greater than 5 ml/g.

33. (Withdrawn) A method of preparing a dough intermediate having improved aesthetic and organoleptic properties, the method comprising:
preparing a dough;
creating individual dough intermediates from said dough;
applying a plasticizing agent to a surface of said dough intermediate; and
baking said dough intermediate to yield a baked product having improved organoleptic and aesthetic properties.

34. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 33, wherein creating individual dough intermediates includes the formation of one or more fissures on an exterior surface of the individual dough intermediates and wherein the plasticizing agent is embedded within the fissure.

35. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 33, wherein the applying the plasticizing agent includes spraying the plasticizing agent onto the surface of said dough intermediate.